



Brussels Newcomer's Guide



Welcome to Brussels!

This small publication is intended to be a basic guide on how to set up your household in our joint and inter-agency Brussels community. Its focus is your first four or so weeks here. This product is *not* intended to be a comprehensive guide to your family's 2-3 year assignment in Brussels. "Relocation" in that sense is a continuous, and continuing, process. You will develop your own network here which will take you dramatically beyond the first weeks of "setting up shop." Before you know it, other newcomers will be turning to you for advice.

We recommend two basic sources for "advanced" information on becoming a part of the Brussels Community.

The Army Community Services (ACS) at the USAG Brussels offers assistance and advice to *all* newcomers, regardless of service or agency affiliation, in a broad area directly or indirectly related to "relocation." Besides having an actual specialist dedicated to relocation, ACS staff will happily assist you in such areas as employment-seeking, a well-stocked lending closet, information about Brussels and life in this city, and the many other services the U.S. Army garrison provides all-comers. ACS is located on the second floor of our garrison's Bldg. 4, and can be reached by calling 02-717-9783. Please pay ACS a visit.

The Tri-Missions Community Liaison Officer (CLO) provides similar services to the employees and families of the three U.S. diplomatic missions located in Brussels. The CLO office is located at the chancery downtown, and can be reached at 02-508-2227 or -2289. CLO staff are here to serve you.

Regardless of your parent agency or service, if you are in Brussels doing the work of the United States, we extend to you a cordial welcome!

For Starters, Which "Status" Do You Fall Under?

Brussels is an anomaly among military communities overseas. Although the U.S. Army, through the U.S. Army Garrison, Brussels, is the DoD Executive Agent providing all, most, or some support to our Joint and Inter-agency community, the status of your sponsor determines who will provide you with which services.

As a rule of thumb, the official U.S. government-related population in Brussels falls under one or the other of the following two situations, or a third amalgam, each described below:

- **DIPLOMATIC STATUS:** All U.S. State Department employees and representatives of certain USG agencies attached to one of the Tri-Missions whose parent agency has negotiated an "ICASS" agreement with the Department of State. Resident in Belgium under bilateral diplomatic agreements, under internationally-accepted norms of diplomatic privilege and immunity. All check-in is accomplished in Brussels. Sponsors and family members carry a carnet [Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs ID card]. POVs bear "CD" plates. Housing arranged through Tri-Missions Joint Administrative Services. Dependent children eligible to attend Brussels-area international schools on a funded basis. Not required to obtain a Belgian or other driver's license. Medical and dental needs handled via the Tri-Missions Health Unit.
- **"SHAPE" STATUS:** The *majority* [but not an overwhelming majority] of U.S. military and civil service personnel, including DoDDS teachers, USAG Brussels employees, U.S. civilian nationals attached to the NATO International Staff (IS), and U.S. service personnel assigned to the NATO International Military Staff (IMS) fall under "SHAPE" status. Their legal presence in Belgium derives from the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, which carefully delineates rights and privileges in Belgium. Administrative check-in is through the U.S. National Military Representative (NMR) and the Belgian Federal Police in Mons, and necessitates an actual trip to Mons. Sponsors and family members carry a distinct SHAPE ID card, and become enrolled on the books of the commune in which they reside. They eventually receive a "Commune Card," which is a legal identification that must be carried on one's person. POVs bear blue & white-colored SHAPE plates, obtained in Mons. Their housing is arranged through the USAG Brussels Housing Support Office [see separate section in this pamphlet]. Dependent children are "required" to attend the DoDDS Brussels American School or a Belgian commune school if no-cost education is desired; attendance at Brussels-area international schools is optional, however, the cost must be borne by the sponsor. Required to obtain either a SHAPE or Belgian or International driver's license. Medical and dental needs (in *most* cases; there are exceptions) handled via the branch SHAPE clinics located on the grounds of the Sterrebeek Annex to the USAG Brussels.
- **"IN BETWEEN:"** A number of U.S. military and DoD civil service personnel assigned to either the U.S. Mission to NATO or the U.S. Delegation to the NATO Military Committee [the "U.S. Del"] enjoy an *intermediate* status between the above two. These sponsors and their families reside in Belgium under *diplomatic* status, with attendant rights and privileges. All administrative check-in is physically accomplished in Brussels. Sponsors and family members carry a carnet [Belgian



Ministry of Foreign Affairs ID card]; they do **not** get a “Commune Card.” POVs bear “CD” plates. These individuals, however, go to the USAG Brussels Housing Support Office to arrange their housing and negotiate a lease. Their dependent children are “required” to attend the DoDDS Brussels American School or a Belgian commune school if no-cost education is desired; attendance at Brussels-area international schools is optional, however, the cost must be borne by the sponsor. As diplomats, these individuals are **not** required to obtain a Belgian or other driver’s license. Medical and dental needs handled via the branch SHAPE clinics located on the grounds of the Sterrebeek Annex to the USAG Brussels.

Your sponsor and your agency will explain which of the above “status” situations you fall under.

Important Note: Personnel and family members in the above three categories, unless specifically addressed otherwise, are eligible to use ***all*** the services and facilities of the USAG Brussels. The most obvious exception relates to housing support. Persons under “pure” diplomatic status obtain their housing through the Tri-Missions GSO/Housing Office, and ***not*** from the USAG Brussels Housing Support Office. Household Goods shipments are handled likewise. The Tri-Missions Community Liaison Office will explain to personnel not assigned to US NATO how to obtain ID cards which provide access to the USAG Brussels.

Housing In Brussels

This is probably the pre-eminent concern of all new arrivals, hence the length of this section.

With the exception of some Enlisted Quarters (EQs) and some quarters managed by the Embassy for Embassy sponsored Personnel, Brussels Belgium has no Government housing. All housing is through private rental agreement off-post.

State Department personnel have their housing provided by the Joint Administrative Services GSO/Housing. Call 02-508-2365. The GSO maintains a pool of rental available to State or supported agency families. Rent & utilities are handled by GSO.

All SHAPE-sponsored U.S. Military and Civilian Personnel assigned to NATO-IMS, US Del, U.S. NATO, USAG-Brussels, DoDDS, Health and Dental Clinic are entitled to housing support by the USAG Brussels Housing Support Office (HSO). The Active Duty component at U.S. NATO which is not SHAPE-sponsored also gets its housing support from our HSO. All other U.S. families under diplomatic status receive their housing support via the Tri-Missions.

Advance liaison with our HSO prior to a family’s arrival in Brussels is both welcome and encouraged, both to ensure temporary lodging arrangements have been made prior to arrival and to help our staff gauge your family’s needs. Our HSO can be contacted through any of several means:

E-mail: brussels.housing@benelux.army.mil

Phone: NOTE- to call Brussels, Belgium commercially from the U.S., dial 011-32-2-seven digit local number. Once in Brussels, delete the 011-32 and add a “0” preface to the “2,” as in, “02-717-9799.” The Europe DSN area code is 314.

Housing Director: 011-32-2-717-9799 or DSN (314) 368-9799

Housing Referral Officer: 011-32-2-717-9778 or DSN (314) 368-9778

Housing Referral Assist: 011-32-2-717-9734 or DSN (314) 368-9734

Temporary Lodging and Unaccompanied Enlisted Quarters: 011-32-2-717-9731 or DSN (314) 368-9731

Incoming sponsors should register with the HSO as soon as possible upon arrival in Brussels, both to ensure temporary lodging arrangements are in order and to allow us to schedule your in-brief. This approximately two-hour long comprehensive briefing will educate you about all you’ll need to know about Belgian real estate and will provide you a description of the different neighborhoods recommended for rentals.

HSO will provide you listings of available houses, as well as a list with realtors that will assist you, free of charge, finding a house. Our staff is tri-lingual, and can assist you in your dealings with both realtors and land-lords.

Most houses in the greater Brussels and suburban areas are freestanding with yards. Rent varies according to size, but is usually about € 800.00 for a 4 or 5 bedroom house. Most families we service elect to live within a 10 km radius of the NATO headquarters. The USAG Brussels, Health & Dental clinics, and Brussels American School are located within this radius.

Once you have selected a house, HSO will set up an appointment and assist you

negotiating the lease. It is custom that you pay the first month rent during lease signature. Additionally, the landlord is legally entitled to ask for up to 3 months' rent as a guarantee deposit. This can either be done by means of bank guarantee letter or cash money in a blocked account. The interest of a blocked account goes to the tenant. Damages upon departure will be deducted from the blocked account, or the bank guarantee. In the latter case you will have to reimburse the bank the cost of the damages that are paid to the owner.

All costs for utilities, water, heater/boiler maintenance, water softener maintenance, yard maintenance, garbage removal etc. are for the tenant, unless otherwise agreed in your lease contract. If you live in an apartment you will also have to pay for building common area charges.

Utilities: Belgium is part of the free market for utility providers. There is a plethora of them, and each has their own rates. Which rate is best for you depends on how you live. HSO will provide you a list of providers with which you can check on the internet about the pros and cons of each.

Belgium has a water pollution tax which is directly proportional to the amount of water used. The more water you use, the more tax you pay. Count an average of € 5.00 per cubic meter of water.

HSO can further assist you with setting up your phone, cable TV, internet, etc. Again, there are different providers with different rates.

Military Personnel are entitled to a Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA). An initial period of 30 days is authorized. This can be extended to maximum 60 days if justified. The HSO has established three Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA) with 2 local hotels and an apart-hotel (with kitchen facility). Military Personnel may make use of these facilities and avoid up-front, out-of-pocket lodging expenses, providing you have a copy of your orders. If your lodging facility has a kitchen, you will only receive half of the authorized per diem. You are free to stay in any lodging option of your choice within the per diem limit and request reimbursement, after-the-fact. For more information on per diem rates visit <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/perdiem/perdiemrates.html>. Per diem rates are at a 100% (sponsor plus the oldest dependent). You receive an additional 25% of the rate for each dependent under 12 and an additional 35% for each dependent over 12.

During your TLA you will be required to do aggressive house hunting and look at a minimum of 5 houses per 10 day period. Reasons for non-acceptance will be carefully scrutinized. You cannot turn down an adequate house.

Civilian Personnel receive an allowance for temporary lodging directly from the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC). Civilian Personnel cannot make use of the BPA and are responsible for their own lodging arrangements, however, the HSO can assist you in finding a hotel.

Personal Property & Vehicle Shipments

Inbound personal property shipments of State Department personnel are handled by the Joint Administrative Services GSO, located in the embassy compound. Contact 02-508-2364 to arrange delivery.

Inbound personal property shipments of U.S. DoD personnel are handled by the USAG Brussels. The garrison's Personal Property Office is located on the second floor of Bldg. 4 in the garrison compound. The office can be contacted at 02-717-9722.

The Department of Defense is in a transition period as it implements its new Defense Personal Property System (DPS), which is designed to improve the move experience for DoD personnel. One of the goals of DPS is to provide the possibility of continuous and direct communications between the Transportation Service Provider and the service member from any location with internet access.

Postal Services

The Tri-Missions are serviced by a State Department-run postal system. Incoming U.S. personal mail is distributed to individual mail boxes located either at the U.S. Embassy or at NATO, depending on the sponsor's work place. The USAG Brussels hosts an Army Post Office (APO), which also distributes mail to individual boxes located on the ground floor of the garrison's Building #2. The USAG Brussels APO handles the mail of garrison employees, DoDDS teachers, garrison tenants, and some special cases.

Each of these "U.S." Post Offices is open, five days per week, for window operations and sales. Note that no mail is delivered to these Post Offices on weekends or U.S. holidays.

Once you establish residence in your house, it is important that you *frequently* check your home mailbox. All of your Belgian bills (e.g., utility and medical bills), Belgian bank statements, and police & commune notices will come via your home mailbox, NOT your "U.S." mailbox. Carefully examine all bills or correspondence which appears "bill-like," especially if it is specifically addressed to you. Non-payment of such bills will, not unreasonably, end with termination of service and can result in legal action being taken against you. If in doubt, bring the particular bill to one of the bi- or tri-lingual employees of either the USAG Brussels ACS or its Housing Support Office.

Banking

Unless you will be moving into Embassy-provided housing [which encompasses rent and utilities], you will almost certainly have to establish a local bank account through which to pay your rent and utility bills, as well as miscellaneous expenditures (e.g., car tax to the Belgian authorities, or your bank guarantee letter). Banking is quite advanced and competitive in Belgium, with numerous reputable and high-profile banks having branches in your local commune. In addition to the convenience of being able to pay local bills by electronic bank transfer, many of these offer home online banking. The NATO HQ contains a branch office of one such bank, particularly convenient for those who work at the HQ, however, we urge you to consult with colleagues to seek out the bank which best suits your needs.

The Andrews Federal Credit Union (AFCU) maintains a branch at the USAG Brussels. In addition to offering the convenience of a local U.S. institution which can accept your U.S. government paycheck by electronic deposit and offer you loans via the U.S. system,



the AFCU can also be your agent for the payment of a number of local bills. The Brussels AFCU branch is located on the second floor of Bldg. 2 of the USAG Brussels. It can be reached at 02-717-9779.

Currency Conversion

There are three basic options for converting U.S. dollars to Euros:

- Those U.S. personnel working at NATO HQ (Mission, Delegation, IMS, IS) can use the Tri-Missions cashier, which visits the U.S. Mission on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You will almost always get the best exchange rate through the Tri-Missions cashier.
- The AFCU branch located at the USAG Brussels, or the adjacent Army Finance Office. Both offer the identical exchange rate [the rate established by the DoD-contracted Community Bank in theater]. This rate is usually inferior to that offered by the Tri-Missions cashier.
- Finally, full-service Belgian bank branches offer currency exchange. You will usually obtain a slightly better rate than that offered by the DoD-contracted Community Bank.

Brussels Medical and Dental Care

The system of health and dental care you and your family members will fall under is a function of your status as a sponsor [see the “Status” discussion at the beginning of this pamphlet] and your employment contract.

There is no U.S. military or U.S. government hospital located in Brussels. The nearest U.S. military hospital is located in Landstuhl, Germany, a minimum of a 3 ½ hour drive from Brussels.

Both the Tri-Missions Health Unit and the U.S. Army SHAPE branch Medical and Dental clinics offer limited primary and specialty outpatient care in Brussels. Emergency Room or medical and dental procedures beyond the primary level are “out-sourced” to local hospitals or practitioners. The two Army clinics are co-located on the grounds of the Sterrebeek Annex of the USAG Brussels, i.e., the site of the Brussels American School. The Tri-Missions Health Unit is located in the embassy compound.

The SHAPE Brussels Health and Dental Clinics are branches of larger Army parent clinics located in Mons. All active duty U.S. military personnel of all services and their family members assigned to Brussels and enrolled in DEERS [Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System] are eligible to use these outpatient facilities on a non-paying basis. Retirees and their family members enrolled in DEERS are similarly entitled, but have a secondary priority to active duty members and their family members. In practice, the Brussels area medical and dental workloads have allowed the clinics to cater to each group. The Health Clinic includes a pharmacy. Services such as optometry are provided at the parent health clinic in Mons by appointment.

Medical & dental sick call are conducted during the early hours of each work day. All other services are by appointment. For appointments or questions, call:

- Health Clinic: 02-717-9500
- Dental Clinic: 02-717-9520.
- Embassy Health Unit: 02-508-2225

Neither the Tri-Missions Health Unit nor the SHAPE branch Medical clinic offer any type of inpatient hospital-type care. The SHAPE branch Medical clinic has developed a formal relationship with the Leuven University Hospital, some 15 kilometers away, as its preferred acute care provider. The clinic, through its Patient Liaison services, brokers care, appointments and other services prescribed by its providers with the Leuven University Hospital, which is considered world-class. English is commonly spoken by its providers.

The Embassy Health Unit provides its patrons with a list of vetted providers.

The SHAPE Brussels Health Clinic can provide care for certain non-military, DoD employees (e.g., DoDDS teachers) on a reimbursable basis. Individuals in such a status should consult with Clinic personnel upon arrival and decide whether such service is advantageous.

Children’s Education In Brussels

Brussels American School

There is one Department of Defense school in the Brussels area, Brussels American School (BAS). DoDDs is the ninth largest school system in American public education and sets high educational policies and standards. Brussels American School’s small enrollment provides a distinct advantage for its students. The students enjoy a high degree of close, personal contact with staff and instructors, which creates a family-like atmosphere. Course offerings compare favorably to the curriculum of larger Defense Department schools and schools of like size in the United States. The small school size also permits most students to actively participate in athletic and extracurricular activities.

The school has its own playing fields, library, special learning facilities, and labs for science, computer studies, home economics and business. The campus also includes a multi-purpose room for assemblies and a gymnasium. The Army Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) provides hot lunches daily in the school cafeteria. BAS enrolls approximately 300 students from 21 different countries.

The BAS campus is situated on 17 acres of landscaped grounds in Sterrebeek, a Brussels suburb. Since the school opened in October 1967, numerous improvements to the facilities have been made, yielding a complex that adequately serves the educational, athletic, extracurricular and social needs of a diverse student body and community.

The mission of Brussels American School is to provide each student a diverse education in a safe, supportive environment that promotes self-discipline, global citizenship, tolerance and academic excellence.

School Registration: To register children for school you will need passport/birth certificate, up-to-date shot records, travel orders listing family members, sponsor’s ID card and previous school records. Online registration can be completed at <http://www.brus-ehs.eu.dodea.edu/registration/registration.html> ; however, even if you pre-register, you must still go to the school to complete the registration process.

BAS	General Services
Local Number	02-717-9552
Calling from the United States	011-32-2-717-9552
Web site	http://www.brus-ehs.eu.dodea.edu

Other International Schools in Brussels

There are two major international schools in the Brussels area. These are non-boarding, tuition-paying schools. The U.S. government does not provide any reimbursement of tuition for family members of military and civilians hired through the Department of Defense. This does not apply to those who are contracted personnel or Department of State employees.

International School of Brussels (ISB): The ISB is located on a large, wooded campus on the outskirts of Brussels, offering classes for grades K-12 and a nursery school for children ages three to four. ISB is the oldest and largest international school in Brussels and approximately 40 percent of its students are American.

Bus transportation is provided and the high school participates in conference sports. Because there is often a waiting list and tuition costs vary from year to year, it is suggested that families interested in obtaining more information contact the school directly at the number below. To learn more, check out their website at: www.isb.be.

St. John’s International School: St. John’s International School is located in Waterloo. It

is a Catholic school, but children of all faiths are welcome. It also has a nursery for school children ages three to four. An American curriculum is offered in addition to European academic programs. For more information, visit www.stjohns.be

Belgian Schools

Belgian Pre-schools

In Brussels many parents use the Belgian pre-school and childcare system. Regardless of where you live in Brussels, there will be a Belgian pre-school open to residents of your commune. Many of these are fee-based for foreigners. For more information check with the *maison communale* in your area or contact the CYSS School Liaison Officer or the Outreach Services Director, at DSN 368-9651/9670; CIV 02-717-9651/9670 or click on the School Liaison Officer link at <http://www.usagbrussels.eur.army.mil>

Belgian or Commune Schools

American students living in Belgium may attend a Belgian school with no tuition fees. The academic standards are comparative to those in the United States while also providing language and cultural enrichment. Instruction is either in Flemish or French, depending on the commune or town of residence. The younger the child, the easier it is to assimilate the language. Belgian schools are not required to provide tutors for language assistance; however, some do integrate some additional classroom assistance.

Belgian school registration occurs in the spring and late summer. Most communes make an effort to publicize the dates for registration so contact your local *maison communal* for more information. The school term starts the first Monday of September and runs through the last Friday of June. For more information on Belgian schools in Brussels, contact the USAG Brussels School Liaison Officer at DSN 368-9670; CIV 02-717-9670 or click on the School Liaison Officer link at <http://www.usagbrussels.eur.army.mil>



Driver’s Licensing

Individuals under diplomatic status are required to have a valid license in their possession, issued by a recognized authority (e.g., a U.S. state). If your vehicle will have “CD” plates, you are good to go.

Individuals who fall under SHAPE status and who want to retain their U.S. driver’s license must obtain a “SHAPE” driver’s license. Applicants must take a 3-hour orientation course and two tests (in Belgian road signage and road law). The USAG Brussels periodically offers the course and tests, and has study books available for check-out. Call 02-717-9785 to learn the date of the next class and reserve yourself a spot. The classes are also offered periodically at SHAPE; a call to the same number can help you ascertain which testing location best suits you.

Of note, if you are under SHAPE status and if your job will require you to drive a U.S. government-owned vehicle (GOV), you will also have to obtain a GOV license. Call the same number for details.

Note that your SHAPE license is only valid for driving in Belgium. You will need your valid U.S. license when driving in adjacent countries. Alternatively, you can drive in adjacent countries with a valid international driver’s license. Finally, it is possible to obtain a valid Belgian driver’s license, without examination, through you commune office, upon presentation of your valid U.S. license. You will have to “give up” your U.S. license for the duration of your stay in Belgium [it will be returned to you upon conclusion of your assignment].

Vehicle Registration

Individuals under diplomatic status obtain their “CD” plates via the JAS GSO. Call 02-508-2364.

The process for SHAPE-sponsored individuals is more complex, and is physically accomplished in Mons. For questions of a Brussels-based expert, call 02-717-9785.

In either case, you must have with you:

- Your vehicle shipping document;
- Your green insurance card;
- Proof of previous registration;
- Your valid driver’s license;
- Proof of ownership;
- Your vehicle chassis number

English Language Radio and Television

There are two basic options for English-language radio in greater Brussels. The American Forces Network broadcasts on 101.7 FM in and around Brussels. You must change frequencies if you leave the Brussels footprint; in Chievres, it’s 107.9 FM, and in the Mons area, 104.2 and 106.5 FM. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) broadcasts its World Service throughout Belgium on 650 AM.

AFN television is also available. A few community members residing in Everberg, close to the transmission tower there, MAY be able to pick up one AFN channel using “rabbit ear” antennae or a small inside dish. The majority of community members desiring access to AFN television will need to purchase a satellite dish and rent or purchase a decoder from the AAFES PX at Chievres or Schinnen. This will allow you to receive six AFN channels. The U.S. programs include news, sports, soap operas, movies, children programs and popular prime-time shows. A new satellite dish cost about \$100, then you pay \$25 per month to rent (or \$500 to own) the decoder. For an additional charge of \$100, you can hire a technician to install the satellite dish and decoder for you. If you chose to have AFN only, then you don’t have to purchase a multi-system or PAL-only television. Your American television with a transformer and adequate antenna or dish is sufficient to bring AFN to your home.

Note: Many communes restrict the placement of outside dishes. Check with your landlord before you buy.

A number of Belgian cable providers will also compete for your business, typically as part of an internet package. Considerable English-language programming is available, particularly, up to four of the BBC TV channels from the UK.





Army Community Services (ACS) Newcomers Services

The Army Community Service (ACS) serves as the USAG Brussels' primary coordinating agency for connecting newcomers to a multitude of services for the entire Brussels community. The vision is to be the first choice for community support by offering innovative and high quality programs. *ACS offerings are available to all Brussels Community members, irrespective of parent agency.* ACS offices are physically located on the top floor of Bldg. 4 of the USAG Brussels. You can call ACS at 02-717-9693.

A major offering tailored to newcomers is the Newcomers Orientation week, offered monthly during our busiest PCS season (May through September) and on alternating months throughout the year. This orientation includes sessions on the following: consist of the following classes for all branches of services both military and civilian personnel:

- Newcomers Briefings: An all day event designed for new arrivals. Key agencies will present a brief overview of their programs, answer questions and ensure a smoother transition to Brussels.
- Shopping on the Economy Classes: The director of a major local grocery store in a nearby commune will familiarize newcomers with a local food store. Newcomers learn all about the shopping at local super markets, weighing food, slicing fresh bread and more. There is also a walking tour of an Open Air Produce Market in another nearby commune offered the same week.
- Leuven "Gasthuisberg" Hospital Tour: The Leuven University Hospital is the inpatient provider to which the SHAPE Brussels Health Clinic refers its patients. It is a world-class facility. This is an important tour for new community members who will be patrons of the SHAPE Brussels Health Clinic.
- "Metro Madness:" Newcomers will not want to miss this popular class. Learn the easiest way to travel in the Brussels Capital Region. The ACS Relocation Manager will teach you how to use public transportation system. The class is followed by an exploratory trip downtown Brussels to the Grand Place.

ACS also has a "lending closet" of basic household goods for use by newcomers in transition. Items available for loan include pots, pans, fans, vacuum cleaners and much more. Its newest addition is a number Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers to help you navigate through Brussels and beyond during your first few weeks here.

Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)

The EFMP is a mandatory enrollment program for DoD Family Members who have special needs. All military families should have completed the enrollment process prior to their arrival in Brussels. EFMP eligibility is complex and highly individualized. Additionally, EFMP support infrastructure routinely available at large military installations or in U.S. communities may not be available in Brussels. If you have a family member enrolled in EFMP, please call 02-717-9721 at the earliest opportunity.

Family Member Employment

Brussels tends to be a difficult place for family members, other than the sponsor, to secure employment. Sponsors, by definition, have already been ordered by their service or agency to a finite number of positions. The only U.S. government work routinely recruited for in this city tends toward "low end" jobs, which invariably means the sponsor must already have legal residency status. Jobs are available at the Tri-Missions, the USAG Brussels and the US Del. Plan on a 1-8 month wait and budget accordingly.

U.S. citizens not here under USG-sponsorship require a Belgian work permit or dual-citizenship in any other EU member nation. It is not impossible to find employment on the economy, however, newcomers who are not EU citizens will find the process extremely difficult.

Options for teens to work are extremely limited. The USAG Brussels and Tri-Missions offer brief Summer Hire Programs during the summer break. Application and hiring are done before the break begins, so family members who arrive once the programs are in session are ineligible. The AAFES concessions at the USAG Brussels offer a limited number of jobs for those 18 and older.

The ACS Employment Readiness Program Manager is there to help family members find out how to apply for, and obtain, available employment in the Brussels area. The ACS Employment Readiness Program Manager can help family members find out how to apply for employment in the Brussels area. Call 02-717-9735.





Brussels American Chapel

The Brussels American Chapel offers Protestant Worship Services for the entire family. The Brussels Chapel is located on USAG Brussels, Bldg. 4 Room 202.

For more information or Religious Service call 02-717-9708.

Sunday
1030-1200 Protestant Chapel Service
1200- Children's Choir Rehearsal

Monday
1900-2100 Women's Catholic Bible Study

Thursday
0930-1200 Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC)

Saturday
0830-1030 Protestant Men of the Chapel (PMOC)

The Community's large Catholic population is served by the St. Anthony's parish in Kraainem, about 2 Km from the USAG Brussels. The address is Oudstrijderslaan 23-25, 1950 Kraainem, phone 02-720-1970.

Commissary & Post Exchange

Brussels does not have either a DeCA Commissary or AAFES Post Exchange. The small AAFES "Shoppette" located at the USAG Brussels carries a surprisingly large selection of sundries and consumables, but is neither a commissary nor a PX.

There are two choices for a commissary and PX combination, located, respectively, in Chievres (south of Brussels) or Schinnen (northeast of Brussels). Each complex is approximately an hour's drive from Brussels.

Addresses for GPS purposes are:

USAG Brussels - Chaussee de Louvain 1932 St. Stevens Woluwe Belgium
USAG Chievres- Chaussee de Mons 7940 Brugelette Belgium
USAG Schinnen- Borgerweg 6365 CW The Netherlands

If you are unable to procure a GPS unit from ACS, another option is to go to an online map service, such as MAPPY.be, enter your start and destination, and obtain both detailed directions and a printed map. The USAG library has numerous computers available for your use. Finally, ACS staff will be happy to help you plan your first trip.

The DeCA commissaries are certainly a bargain, however, given the length of the trip and cost of gas, most Brussels patrons plan "runs" that allow them to stock up on products in bulk.

Belgian supermarkets and the communal butchers, bakers and produce markets offer an excellent variety of products. Finally, the ACS can hook you up with membership in a local Belgian bulk-purchase chain [the "Makro"] chain similar to such discount firms in the U.S. You need to show a membership card in order to enter the store. Stop by ACS to sign up for a free membership card or call ACS at 0-717-9783 for more information.

Child Care

The USAG Brussels Children , Youth and School Services (CYSS) offers two options for childcare for children 6 weeks through preschool:

- CYSS Hourly Care Program located in Building 3 on the garrison offers care from 0900 to 1500, Monday through Friday. Hourly care fees are \$4.00 per hour per child (or \$2.50 per hour depending on your total family income)
- Full-time child care is offered through a contract with a certified Belgian childcare program right across the street from the garrison compound. Care is offered from 0730 to 1800, Monday through Friday. On Belgian holidays when the center is closed, care will be provided in the hourly care program room at no additional cost. Fees are paid to USAG Brussels CYSS in dollars based on your total family income. The difference between the actual cost of care (in Euros) and the fees parents pay (in dollars) is paid by the Army.
- Summer Camp is available for school age children as well as an active after school program.

For more information, contact CYSS at 02-717-9651.



Brussels Newcomer's Guide

